

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02785 01 OF 03 110918Z
ACTION SS-25

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R 110848Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4275
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 BEIRUT 2785

EXDIS

DEPT PASS CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LE, US, MILI
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH LEBANESE FOREIGN MINISTER

1. SUMMARY. CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER FOUAD BOUTROS MORNING JUNE 10 TO GIVE HIM REPORT ON RESULTS MY RECENT CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON AND TO DISCUSS LOCAL SITUATION. BOUTROS SEEMED PLEASED WITH MY UPBEAT PRESENTATION ON AID PROSPECTS AND IMPRESSED WITH WHAT I HAD TO SAY ABOUT OUR SERIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE WITH REGARD MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. HE AGREED SADLY WHEN I DISCUSSED PROBLEMS LEBANESE DISORGANIZATION POSED TO OUR EFFORTS TO PUT TOGETHER EFFECTIVE AID PACKAGE. HE CONFIRMED THAT KUWAITIS AND SAUDIS ARE DRAWING BACK FROM THEIR EARLIER COMMITMENTS TO HELP LEBANON AND ASCRIBED THIS TO PLO AND MOSLEM PRESSURES AND TO SYRIAN-SAUDI RIVALRY FOR
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INFLUENCE. HE WISHED TO KNOW OUR VIEWS ON LIKELIHOOD OF WAR IN THE AREA AND SAID SYRIANS WERE PUTTING IT AT 40-50 PERCENT. I SAID IT POSSIBLE CONCEIVE SCENARIO ARISING FROM SITUATION IN SOUTH BUT DID NOT THINK IT VERY LIKELY. BOUTROS SAID HE WAS PRVATELY SLIGHTLY OPTIMISTIC THAT PROGRESS MIGHT BE MADE ON CAIRO ACCORD BUT WAS AFRAID TO

SAY SO BECAUSE HE HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTED
SO MANY TIME IN PAST. END SUMMARY.

2. CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS MORNING
JUNE 10 TO GIVE HIM REPORT ON MY CONSULTATION IN
WASHINGTON. BEGAN BY TRANSMITTING SECRETARY'S
PERSONAL GREETINGS AND TELLING HIM THAT WASHINGTON
STILL THINKING IN TERMS OF VISIT TO AREA BY SECRETARY
IN LATE JULY. PRESENT PLANNING WAS THAT SECRETARY
WOULD VISIT BEIRUT AT SOME POINT DURING THE TOUR.
I HOPED WE COULD ARRANGE FOR LONGER VISIT THAN
LAST ONE BUT DID NOT BELIEVE SECRETARY WOULD BE
PREPARED REMAIN OVERNIGHT.

3. MIDDLE EAST. GAVE BOUTROS TEXT OF ATHERTON'S
JUNE 8 REMARKS BEFORE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE AND TOLD HIM THAT THIS WAS AUTHORITATIVE
STATEMENT PRESENT U.S. POSITION ON QUESTION MIDDLE
EAST SETTLEMENT. SAID I HAD BEEN IMPRESSED BY
EVIDENT DETERMINATION OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND
HIS ADMINISTRATION TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS ON
MIDDLE EAST ISSUE. I CONVINCED PRESIDENT FULLY
APPRECIATED DIFFICULTIES BUT NOT AFRAID OF POLITICAL
FLAK AND WOULD MAKE SERIOUS AND SINCERE EFFORT
RESOLVE PROBLEM. ON OTHER HAND, WE HAD MADE IT
CLEAR, IN ATHERTON'S STATEMENT AMONG OTHER PLACES,
THAT WE WERE NOT GOING TO IMPOSE A SOLUTION.

4. DISCUSSION OF MEANING OF "IMPOSE" ENSUED.
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BOUTROS ASKED IF IT MEANT WE WOULD BE UNWILLING
EXERT POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC PRESSURES ON THE
PARTIES. I SAID NO, IT MEANT WE WOULD NOT DRAW UP
SOLUTION AND TELL PARTIES THEY MUST ACCEPT IT.
BOUTROS ASKED WHAT WE WOULD DO IF WE FOUND PARTIES
TOO FAR APART TO AGREE. I SAID WE WOULD DO OUR
BEST TO BRIDGE GAP AND BRING THEM TOGETHER, BUT
ULTIMATE DECISION WAS UP TO PARTIES THEMSELVES.

5. ECONOMIC AID. I SAID I HAD FOUND GENERAL
WILLINGNESS TO HELP LEBANON AT ALL LEVELS USG
AND THOUGHT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO PUT TOGETHER
SUBSTANTIAL AID PACKAGE FOR FISCAL 78. AS I HAD
INDICATED EARLIER, WE WERE PLANNING ON \$20 MILLION
GRANT ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PLUS WE WOULD BE
PREPARED ENTERTAIN REQUEST FOR PL-480 COMMODITIES
AND FURTHER HOUSING INVESTMENT GUARANTY LOANS
BEYOND \$15 MILLION ALREADY SCHEDULED. WE WOULD
ALSO BE CONTINUING AID TO AUB AND I WAS HAPPY TO

REPORT THAT EXIM WAS SENDING TEAM HERE SHORTLY TO
LOOK INTO PROSPECTS.

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEE.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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6. MILITARY AID. I SAID WE WERE ALSO TRYING TO
PUT TOGETHER MILITARY ASSISTANCE PACKAGE, AND
CONSULTATIONS WITH CONGRESS ON SUBJECT WERE
TO START THAT SAME DAY. THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE
SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF FMS CREDITS AVAILABLE, IN ADDITION
I HAD MADE RECOMMENDATION THAT THERE BE SOME
GRANT ASSISTANCE. THIS RAN COUNTER TO CURRENT
TRENDS WITHIN USG, BUT I HAD ARGUED LEBANON WAS
SPECIAL CASE. IT REMAINED TO BE SEEN WHETHER MY
ARGUMENT WOULD HAVE EFFECT. IN MEANTIME WE
WERE WORKING ON LEBANESE REQUEST FOR UNIFORMS.
IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT LEBANESE REALIZED THAT
PACKAGE FOR FISCAL 77 PROGRAM HAD TO BE AGREED
UPON AND PRESENTED TO CONGRESS BY JULY 16.
OTHERWISE FUNDS WOULD LAPSE. OUR DEFENSE ATTACHE
WAS IN TOUCH WITH GENERAL KHOURY ON SUBJECT AND
IT IMPORTANT BOUTROS IMPRESS ON KHOURY NEED
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FOR SPEED. HOPED WE WOULD ALSO HAVE FMS PROGRAM FOR FISCAL 78 BUT I WAS NOT SURE OF ITS DIMENSIONS. I WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH HIM ON THIS LATER.

7. BOUTROS TOOK NOTES. HE SAID HE HOPED GRANT PORTION OF MILITARY PROGRAM WOULD BE SUBSTANTIAL BECAUSE IT WAS IMPORTANT TO LEBANESE TO HAVE SUCH EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT. HE ASKED ABOUT TERMS OF FMS CREDITS AND I BEGGED OFF RESPONDING, SAYING I DID NOT YET KNOW DETAILS BUT THAT IN PAST CREDITS HAD BEEN EXTENDED FOR NUMBER OF YEARS AND INTEREST RATES WERE CLOSE TO LONDON INTERBANK.

8. I SAID RECURRING PROBLEM ENCOUNTERED IN EXERCISE OF TRYING TO DETERMIN AID PROGRAM FOR LEBANON WAS LACK OF SPECIFICITY FROM LEBANESE SIDE. I HAD, FOR INSTANCE, ASKED PRESIDENT, PRIME MINISTER AND CHAIRMAN OF DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE US TO DO WITH THE \$20 MILLION GRANT ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND HAD GOTTEN THREE DIFFERENT REPLIES. PRESIDENT HAD SAID HE LEFT IT UP TO US. PRESIDENT DID NOT UNDERSTAND ADVERSARY RELATIONSHIP WHICH CHARACTERIZED DECISION PROCESS IN U.S. GOVERNMENT. SIZE OF PIE WAS LIMITED. SOMEONE HAD TO MAKE DECISION AS TO WHO GOT WHAT, AND THOSE WHO CAME IN WITH A WELL-REASONED RATIONALE AND UNIFIED PRESENTATION WERE THE ONES WHO GOT THE BEST HEARING. BOUTROS SHOOK HIS HEAD SADLY AND SAID HE REALIZED THIS AND UNDERSTOOD EXACTLY WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOUT. ECONOMICS WERE NOT HIS PARTICULAR SPECIALTY AND HE HAD ENOUGH OTHER TROUBLES, BUT HE WOULD TAKE MATTER UP WITH THE PRESIDENT.

9. ARAB AID. I ASKED WHETHER IT WAS TRUE, AS STATEMENTS OF KUWAITI AND SAUDI AMBASSADORS

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INDICATED, THAT THOSE TWO COUNTRIES WERE PULLING ACK FROM THEIR EARLIER COMMITMENTS TO HELP LEBANON WHILE AWAITING RESTORATION OF POLITICAL NORMALITY. HE SAID THIS SEEMED TO BE THE CASE. SAUDIS AND KUWAITIS WERE TELLING PEOPLE NOT TO WORRY, THEY WOULD BE AIDING LEBANESE ONE OF THESE DAYS, BUT NOTHING WAS FORTHCOMING. I ASKED TO WHAT HE ASCRIBED THIS APPARENT CHANGE OF HEART.

HE SAID IT WAS NOT CLEAR, BUT HIS PERSONAL ANALYSIS WAS THAT IT WAS DUE TO THREE FACTORS: (1) PLO HAD PUT PRESSURE ON SAUDIS AND KUWAITIS TO HOLD UP ON DONATIONS UNTIL SUCH TIME AS LEBANESE WORKED OUT ACCOMMODATION ON CAIRO ACCORD THAT PALESTINIANS COULD ACCEPT. (2) LEBANESE MOSLEMS HAD MADE SIMILAR REQUESTS TO KUWAITIS AND SAUDIS AS MEANS OF APPLYING PRESSURE ON GOL TO ARRANGE OVERALL POLITICAL SETTLEMENT ACCEPTABLE TO MOSLEMS. (3) SYRIANS, JEALOUS OF INFLUENCE SAIDIS WOULD GAIN THROUGH SPENDING MONEY IN LEBANON, WERE PLAYING OBSTRUCTIVE ROLE. (BOUTROS INDICATED THIS WAS HIS PERSONAL VIEW, BUT SUBSEQUENT LUNCHEON CONVERSATION ON SUBJECT WITH SENIOR MOSLEM OF RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, WHO ARGUED THAT NO MONEY SHOULD COME IN UNTIL LEBANESE HAD PUT THEIR HOUSE IN ORDER, LENDS CREDENCE TO HIS EXPLANATION.)

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----111015Z 036200 /12

R 110848Z JUN 77
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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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10. ARABS-ISRAEL. BOUTROS THEN ASKED WHETHER, AS A RESULT OF CONTACTS IN RECENT MONTHS WITH ARAB LEADERS, USG HAD IMPRESSION ARABS WERE SUFFICIENTLY UNITED

TO BE ABLE TO NEGOTIATE EFFECTIVELY IN GENEVA. I SAID POSITIONS SET FORTH BY VARIOUS ARAB LEADERS IN WASHINGTON WERE PRETTY CONSISTENT. THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF UNANIMITY AMONG THEM ON THE ESSENTIALS OF A SETTLEMENT. TALKS HAD NOT BEEN ALL THAT DETAILED, HOWEVER, AND I DID NOT KNOW WHETHER, IN POINT OF FACT, ARABS WERE SUFFICIENTLY ORGANIZED TO BARGAIN EFFECTIVELY. THERE STILL SEEMED TO BE SOME DIFFERENCES OF APPROACH ON SUCH MATTERS AS

PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION AND NATURE OF PALESTINIAN HOMELAND. BOUTROS SAID THERE NO REAL DIVERGENCE ON THESE ISSUES. EVERYONE AGREED THAT HOMELAND MUST EXIST AS INDEPENDENT STATE BEFORE IT COULD BE IN CONFIDENTIAL

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FEDERATION WITH ANY OTHER. QUESTION REALLY WAS WHETHER HUSSEIN COULD SURVIVE IF JORDAN WERE DEDERATED WITH PALESTINIAN STATE ORGANIZED BY PLO. PALESTINIANS WOULD BE MAJORITY IN ANY SUCH STATE AND IT SEEMED TO HIM HUSSEIN'S OUTLOOK WOULD BE BLEAK. I SAID IT SEEMED TO ME QUESTION WAS MORE WHETHER PALESTINIANS WOULD ACCEPT CONFEDERATION WITH JORDAN UNDER HUSSEIN. IF THEY DID SO, I THOUGHT HIS CHANCES OF SURVIVAL WERE PRETTY GOOD. (IT IS REMARKABLE HOW WE ARE DIVIDING UP THIS BEAR'S PELT BEFORE HE IS EVEN IN OUR SIGHTS.)

11. BOUTROS THEN ASKED ME WHAT WE THOUGHT PROSPECTS WERE FOR WAR IN AREA. I SAID WE DID NOT THINK ONE WAS VERY LIKELY. ARABS WERE IN NO POSITION TO START ONE AND IT DIFFICULT TO SEE WHAT INTEREST ISRAEL WOULD IN ANOTHER ROUND AT THIS JUNCTURE. SITUATION IN THE SOUTH, OF COURSE, WAS DISTURBING AND THERE WAS POTENTIAL FOR THAT TO GET OUT OF HAND. BOUTROS ASKED WHAT I THOUGHT POSSIBILITY WAS OF THAT HAPPENING. I SAID ONE COULD ENVISION A SCENARIO LEADING TO AN ISRAELI STRIKE AT SOUTHERN LEBANON BUT I DID NOT THINK IT WAS LIKELY TO HAPPEN. BOUTROS SAID THAT SYRIANS PUT RISK AT 40 TO 50 PERCENT. HE THOUGHT THIS WAS HIGH BUT NEVERTHELESS THERE WERE TWO PARTIES WHO HAD AN INTEREST IN STARTING SOMETHING. ONE WAS THE PALESTINIAN EXTREMIST, WHO WOULD LIKE TO BLOCK PROGRESS TOWARD A SETTLEMENT. THE OTHER WAS THE ISRAELI EXTREMISTS, WHO ALSO WOULD LIKE TO BLOCK PROGRESS. EITHER ONE OR BOTH OF THESE GROUPS HAD IT WITHIN THEIR POWER TO CREATE A SITUATION ALONG THE BORDER WHICH WOULD LEAD TO OPEN ARMED CONFLICT. HE THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE VERY UNFORTUNATE FOR LEBANON AND FOR THE AREA. HE ASSUMED WE HAD WARNED

THE ISRAELIS AGAINST ADVENTURES IN THAT AREA. I SAID
WE HAD BUT SITUATION NEVERTHELESS SHOULD BE WATCHED
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VERY CLOSELY.

12. CAIRO AGREEMENT. I ASKED BOUTROS WHETHER
IT TRUE, AS THE PRESS WAS REPORTING, THAT PROGRESS
WAS BEING MADE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CAIRO
AGREEMENT. HE SAID THEY APPEARED TO BE MAKING SOME
PROGRESS AND HE WAS MILDLY OPTIMISTIC BUT WAS AFRAID
TO SAY SO BECAUSE HE HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTED SO MANY
TIMES IN THE PAST. I SAID I GATHERED PALESTINIANS
WERE INTERESTED IN SOME SORT OF ACCOMMODATION ON
THIS ISSUE AND HOPED PARTIES COULD WORK OUT VIABLE
AGREEMENT. HE ECHOED MY HOPE.

13. U.S. VIEWS ON LEBANON. BOUTROS ASKED ME
WHAT THE VIEWS OF THE DEPARTMENT WERE ON THE
SITUATION IN LEBANON--VIEWS PRESUMABLY FORMED
AS RESULT OF MY REPORTING. I SAID I HAD FOUND A
GENUINE CONCERN FOR LEBANON'S FUTURE AND SOME
DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE PACE OF EVENTS. UNDER-
SECRETARY HABIB, FOR INSTANCE, HAD NOTED THAT
PRESIDENT SARKIS HAD TOLD THE SECRETARY HE HOPED
TO HAVE SOME MILITARY UNITS IN THE FIELD BY END OF
THREE MONTHS. THREE MONTHS HAD ELAPSED. WERE
THERE UNITS IN THE FIELD? I HAD HAD TO REPLY THAT
THERE WERE NO UNITS BUT THAT THE LEBANESE ARMY
WAS UNDERTAKING A REORGANIZATION AND WORKING
TOWARDS CREATION OF A NEW ARMY. I HAD TO GIVE
SIMILAR RESPONSES ON QUESTIONS REGARDING THE ECONOMY.
THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON WAS NOT MOVING FAST
ENOUGH. THE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, FOR INSTANCE, HAD BEEN
IN EXISTENCE FOR OVER TWO MONTHS AND HAD YET TO
HIRE NEW STAFF. BOUTROS NODDED AGREEMENT.

14. COMMENT: BOUTROS WAS SOMEWHAT MORE CHEERFUL
THAN LAST TIME I SAW HIM BUT STILL OBVIOUSLY FRUSTRATED
BY LACK OF INTERNAL PROGRESS. HE APPEARED TO BE
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PLEASED BY WHAT I HAD TO SAY ABOUT AID PROGRAMS
BUT ALSO TO BE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE
POLITICAL AND MILITARY PROBLEMS LEBANON FACES.
HE EVIDENTLY WELL AWARE OF SHORTCOMINGS OF

PRESENT GOVERNMENT IN DEALING WITH THEM.

PARKER

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